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HOLIDAY DEADLINE

Due to the Christmas long weekend, deadline for the Dec. 27 issue is 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 21.

SPORTS

Elk Point Midget Avalanche got a big present from Hockey Alberta: hosting the Midget D Provincials.....Page 3

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Elk Point Review

Vol. 36 No. 51 Tuesday, December 20, 2016 $1.10 GST Included

"IS THAT FOR ME?" asks tiny Kenzie, as Cathy Ockerman offers her a candy bag during her visit to Santa at Ferguson Flats community's Family Christmas Party on Sunday. More photos, Page 12.

Elk Point utility rates going up

VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

The water and sewer rates for the Town of Elk Point are being increased as of Jan. 1, 2017, due to rate increases from the Town of St. Paul and the Regional Water Commission and the capital costs for the water reservoir.

Elk Point utility rates need to increase for four reasons, the first being to cover the cost of purchasing treated water from the Town of St. Paul, which has increased from $1.05 per cubic meter ($M^3$) to $1.50 per cubic meter, as of Jan. 1, for both Elk Point and St. Paul residents. Second, the cost charged by the Elk Point/St. Paul Water Commission for pumping water through the pipeline increases from $1.45 to $2.02 per cubic meter, with additional costs for repair and maintenance of the line. Third is the cost to the Town of Elk Point to distribute water and maintain water and sewer lines throughout the town. The fourth is to pay down the loan incurred to construct the water reservoir, and the interest on that loan.

Utility rates for 2014, 2015/2016 and the 2017 rates are as follows:

	2014	2015/16	2017
Basic water (includes 14 M^3)	$32.00	$44.00	$50.00
Basic sewer	8.00	11.00	15.00
Garbage collection	15.00	15.00	15.00
Garbage bin	3.00	3.00	3.00
BASIC TOTAL	**$58.00**	**$73.00**	**$83.00**
Water rate per M^3. over 14 M^3	1.33	3.00	4.00

(One cubic meter equals 264.17 gallons).

Town council picks fill station site

VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

Elk Point town council chose a site just north of the RV dump station for their bulk water fill station, after hearing a very informative presentation by Keith Fransson, senior project manager of Urban Systems Ltd.

Fransson's engineering study determined that the water pressure and flow rate would be adequate at five potential sites and would only need some control upgrades to prevent pressure drop to other customers on the lines when the unit is in use. The new station would cut the time to fill a truck from 45 minutes at the current facility to about 15 minutes, and would reduce wait times.

Council heard that it is possible to have both top and bottom fill hookups at the station, as well as a two-inch fill for smaller tanks, and that all three hookups could be installed on both sides of the unit if council decides that two lanes are needed.

The next step is to get approval of the site from Alberta Transportation, as it is in close proximity to Highway 41. Fransson will provide Alberta Transportation with a design plan to aid in their decision, and if approval is obtained, he will come back to council with a cost estimate for the project.

A second choice site would be in the next block north, in front of the C. G. Baker Memorial Arena, on land currently owned by the County of St. Paul.

CAO Ken Gwozdz was given the go-ahead to apply for a time extension on the grant that will be used to build the station.

"We definitely want to build this," said Deputy Mayor Lorne Young, who chaired the meeting in the mayor's absence.

Shopping locally

A request from chamber of commerce president Jonny Nielsen to make shopping locally for goods and services a priority for the town was brought back to council, along with a copy of the town's purchasing policy and a policy used by the town of Bonnyville. The Elk Point policy states that local firms will be given the opportunity to quote prices and that quotes from local suppliers will be considered, but "does not hamstring us," the deputy mayor said, reminding council that the town must remember that they are spending taxpayers' money.

(Continued on Page 2)

Light judging this week

Elk Point residents are reminded that the Elk Point Chamber of Commerce Residential Lighting and Decorating Contest judges will be touring the town tonight through Thursday. Please have your lights on by 6 p.m. for the judges to enjoy!

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County moving forward with plebiscite

JANICE HUSER
Review Contributor

The County of St. Paul is moving forward with holding a plebiscite during the October municipal election that will ask ratepayers for their opinion on a topic that has resurfaced many times in the past decade.

The question that County of St. Paul residents will see on the ballot, when they vote in the next municipal election will be: "Are you in favour of the County of St. Paul hiring peace officers to carry out traffic and bylaw enforcement activities within its boundaries to be funded from general revenues?"

Currently, the County of St. Paul has a designated staff member who deals with bylaw enforcement issues when complaints arise, while RCMP does traffic enforcement within the county. The idea of having the county hire peace officers to assist in conducting traffic enforcement, along with doing bylaw enforcement within the municipality's boundaries, is one that has been brought forward numerous times.

Although the municipal election is 10 months away, administration is hoping to provide voters with the needed information to allow them to make an informed decision.

"It's an issue that always comes up," says director of legislative and communication services, Kyle Attanasio. Wording the question is a task that requires attention, and consultation with other levels of government, to be sure voters have a clear idea of what is being asked.

Attanasio says the County of St. Paul didn't want to burden the public with a long, confusing question, but at the same time, the municipality wants to be clear in what is being asked, so it can use the information to move ahead.

Reeve Steve Upham says the results of the plebiscite could very well guide the future council on which way to move on the matter.

"There are definitely a variety of opinions around the table. That's why we decided to let the ratepayers have a say," says Upham.

Preliminary estimates peg the start-up costs of bringing in peace officers between $700,000 and $1 million, says Attanasio, although he affirms that is very much a broad estimate. Start-up costs include hiring and training peace officers, purchasing vehicles, and finding space to operate from.

Attanasio notes that one of the first places he will be seeking information will be the county's nearest municipality – the Town of St. Paul.

The town has had its own peace officers for a number of years. Peace officers focus on traffic enforcement, general bylaw enforcement, including unsightly premises, business licenses, animal control, and various other tasks, according to the town's website.

Upham notes that with a municipality that has a lot of diversity within its boundaries, the issue of bylaw enforcement does have to eventually be dealt with.

"We've got a lot of different people using our roads, and quiet frankly, some of those people don't respect our roads," says the reeve, when speaking on one issue the peace officers would address. And this doesn't only mean typical traffic enforcement, but also means issues such as trucks carrying loads that are heavier than allowed on specific roads.

The position of a peace officer would encompass a lot of different areas, adds Upham. He notes that another area that receives regular complaints is the improper use of ATVs near lake subdivisions.

Right now, the county has one staff member who deals with bylaw complaints when they arise. He issues warnings, and has discussions with ratepayers when needed, and works to ensure the bylaws are being adhered to, says Upham.

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Town council

(Continued from Front Page)

Blue bags

Door-to-door pickup of recyclables is still at least a year in the future for Elk Point residents, with council agreeing to revisit the issue in the 2018 budget. In the meantime, the town may conduct a survey to determine if residents would like the service and would be willing to pay extra to obtain it.

No meeting Dec. 26

Council agreed to cancel the next regular council meeting, which would fall on Boxing Day, Dec. 26. The next meeting will now be January 9, 2017.

Recreation Coordinator

A six-month pilot project of adding social media coordination duties to the Recreation Coordinator's job description is now complete, and council agreed that it had been a success, and will continue to be part of her duties.

Bad debt

A long overdue account of $271.70 for dog licenses fines resulting from failure to obtain licenses for two dogs has been written off, because the person no longer lives in this area and has no land on which a caveat could be placed.

Campground contract

The town's contract with the Elk Point Golf and Country Club for campground operation and maintenance was on the agenda, as the town had been billed for $5 per day more than was stated in the 2016 contract, and also were billed for 25 additional days in September after the Labour Day weekend. The club has been invoiced for the overpayment amount and further discussion was tabled until council meets with the club president in January.

2017 Budgets

Council approved the interim 2017 Operating and Capital budgets, with the administration proposing no increase in tax mill rates if there are no changes in assessment and school requisitions. The 2016 assessment will be known at the end of February and the school requisition in May, prior to calculation of the 2017 mill rate.

Council also approved the five-year Capital Plan and 25-year Equipment Replacement Plan as presented.

Ratepayer seeks information

A letter from a ratepayer asking for information and clarification on town operations will be answered early in the New Year, once some research has been done to determine the answers.

Enforcement order

Notice has been served on the owner of an abandoned residence, derelict vehicles and debris. The matter will now go before the courts for an enforcement order, with associated costs to be applied to the property.

Unpaid taxes

The town still has more than $405,000 outstanding taxes on its books, $246,521 of them for the current year, and the CAO is anticipating that a significant portion of these may be paid prior to the Dec. 31 deadline, before additional penalties are added onto the balances owing.

No CIP grant

The town's application for a Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program grant has been turned down. The grant would have been used to complete and enhance the walking trail, and Gwozdz noted that the hoped-for amount was taken out of the 2017 Capital Plan. This frees up the 2017 MSI capital funding, which may now be used for another project.

Deadline extended for MSI

The deadline for applications from non-profit groups for funding from the 2016 MSI operating grant has now been extended to March 15, 2017. Gwozdz and Coun. Debra McQuinn met with the ROCK Foundation and a number of other non-profit organizations early this month as they brainstormed for projects. The groups will meet again Jan. 3 to decide on a joint project that could be financed in part with grant money.

Review closed Dec. 26, Jan. 2

The management and staff of the Elk Point Review reminds our readers that with Christmas and New Year's day falling on Sunday this year, our office will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26 and Monday, Jan. 2, 2017

Elk Point 4-H clubs help out Santas

Both the Elk Point 4-H Beef Club and the Elk Point 4-H Multi Club pitched in to help Elk Point Community Lions with the big job of filling Santas Anonymous food and gift hampers for a total of 52 families. More photos, Page 9

Sue Campbell photo

Provincial D finals in Avalanche's stocking

What a great Christmas present! Big news coming from Hockey Alberta this past week. The Midget Avalanche will be hosting the Midget D provincial finals the weekend of March 24th to 26th. This is terrific news for our Elk Point Minor Hockey association, our arena and our town. Preparations will be starting early in the New Year.

doug **BASSETT**
Review Sports

They say a tie is like kissing your sister! And I know these guys don't like each other that much! Doubt if they would even give them a hug. The **Midget Avalanche** not only tied Frog Lake Friday night 6-all, but then traveled to Kitscoty Saturday night coming home with a 3-all tie that night too. It doesn't matter what they say about it, a tie is still better than a loss. One point is better than none!! In fact, on Friday night the game in Frog Lake never even finished; with five minutes remaining, someone in the building pulled the fire alarm, it was the second time that night. So the game was called.... guess we will never know, but, who knows, just maybe the Avalanche may have won that one. 'Captain Obvious' Austin Stafford opening up the scoring, assisted by Angus 'Micky' McFarlane, who then went on to score one himself, before Nick 'Sparky' Anderson went on a rampage and lit up the Christmas tree with four more in a row. Chad 'Pick Pocket' Poitras assisting on his first one, Hayden 'Hot Wheels' Ludlage with two helpers. On Saturday in Kitscoty, 'Sparky' Brody 'the Big O' Odgaard, and Kyle 'Ketchup' Kjenner with one each, 'Pick Pocket', 'Captain Obvious' and 'Micky' with the assists.

Saturday morning at the A. G. Ross arena, all the little **Micro Novice** guys were excited to play one last game before Santa comes to visit, winning this one 11 to 5 over Kitscoty. Jonathan McAleese and Theo Loughran scoring their first goals ever. Theo making two beauty back-to-back saves too, later in the game when he was between the pipes. Remington 'Steel' Reynolds, 'Wyatt Earp' Fontaine, and Jaxon Smith all with hat tricks, 'Davey Crockett' Cardinal with an assist.

The **Novice 1A** team played at home on Saturday against Kikino, losing a close on 7 to 5. 'Hurricane Kayl' Warawa scoring the first one assisted by Boe Johnson and 'Stellar Ella' Ballas, Madden 'Mad Dog' Flamand with a hat trick, Raif 'Rug Rat' Evans Anderson with a goal and an assist. Behind the mask, Sebastian Brousseau played sensational. On Sunday they traveled to Lac La Biche, calling up Jaxon Smith from the Micro Novice farm team, and he did a fantastic job of defending our end of the rink. 'Mad Dog' with a hat trick, Sebastian with two, 'Stellar Ella' with one, 'Notorious Nolan' Ballas, and Everett Lindsay both getting assists, goalie 'Without a Trace' Morgan with some awesome goaltending. The final score, 8 to 6 in favor of Lac La Biche.

The **Peewee** boys played really well and gave a 100 per cent effort when they traveled to Plamondon on Sunday, losing 8 to 4. 'Mic Jager' Fontaine with all the goals, Brady 'Bionic Man' Hymanyk, 'Bazooka Joey' Cardinal, Odin 'the Wall' Smith and Kobe 'the Cobra' Warawa going strong both ways. 'Wild Wyatt' Pavoll with the heart and hustle award.

It's not very often that this will happen in minor hockey. A real good old goaltenders duel on Saturday night at the A.G.R. when the **Bantam** team hosted the Vermilion Tigers, the final score 1 all. Sometimes you may get a close game, but this one was a real barn-burner. Jaden 'Jet Stream' Van Maarion the only goal scorer for the Avalanche, assisted by 'King Cole' Bendixen and 'Lightning Liam' Ludlage. The Sheriff in town was smoking hot, goalie Colton 'Colt 45' Van Maarion closed the door on the jail, and threw away the key, nothing getting past him in this one ...well almost nothing, one did slip through the cracks, but that was all.

The **Storm** girls finished up the year with back-to-back games against Lloydminster, traveling there on Saturday and hosting the other Lloydminster team on Sunday. Rugged defense woman Jadey 'the Lady' Capjack roofing a wicked wrist shot high into the twine on Sunday, assisted by the little work horse Laramie 'Louis' Parr. 'Louis' named the Storm Trooper of the game on Saturday. Lots of effort by the whole team, the girls are getting much better at getting the puck out of our zone, banking it off the boards. On Sunday 'Gorgeous Georgia' Bendixen, Jace 'Jack Hammer' Wiedmark and Jelena 'Prime Time' Parr named the players of the game.

Maybe because of the excitement of Christmas holidays coming and the late nights out at parties, etc., they didn't play their best game, but it was still a very good learning experience for the **Atom Avalanche** on Saturday when they hosted the tier one team from Battle River area in an exhibition game. Very hard to beat these teams, but they will still have to be better prepared next time.

The **Novice 1 B** team played Sunday at home against St. Paul winning 8 to 1. Braylee 'BJ' Lesyk with a hat trick, two goals for Evett 'Snoopy' Smereka, one each for Kale Ockerman, Charlotte Henderson, and Kaysen DeMoissac. And finally remember to be good, less than a week to Christmas and Santa is always watching!!

And now for the K.A. Campbell quote of the week. "All I can say to young players is enjoy every moment of it. Just enjoy every moment of it. Your career goes by very quickly." Last week's answer to "After 13 years I couldn't accept to be Number two." - Guy Lafleur

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In lieu of sending Christmas cards Lakeland Realty has made a donation to Santa's Anonymous.

Editorial

Yes, Virginia and other doubters

This past Sunday's edition of "The West Block" featured a number of Members of Parliament reading the famous editorial, "Is there a Santa Claus?," written in 1897 in the *New York Sun* in response to a letter from an eight-year-old named Virginia who doubted his existence, but agreed to her father's assurance that, "If you see it in the *Sun*, it's so."

The editorial stated, "He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy."

That's much too big a job for one chubby old elf, so there's not only A Santa Claus, there are many, many Santas, and they don't just work on Christmas Eve. They are all around us, and they work all year to help others that need some assistance. They do this out of the goodness of their hearts, not because they are expected to do so, but because they really, really want to make things better for others.

Some of these Santas are even younger than Virginia, for example, the youngest students at Elk Point Elementary, who, like their older counterparts, hauled in sacks of grocery items that would become part of the food hampers delivered by Santas Anonymous, as well as contributing toys to fill the big red boxes. Some of the members of both Elk Point 4-H clubs are not that much older, and they came out to help the Community Lions and other volunteers to wrap gifts and sort all those food contributions into hampers.

Students of both schools already had a head start on playing Santa more than a month before that, when they packed up shoeboxes to send to the impoverished children of the Ukraine and other countries where children would not have toys, school supplies and other gifts, if it weren't for the Canadians who generously share what they have with others far away.

Actually, giving got a much earlier start this year, when the whole community, along with most of the province and even people across the country, pitched in what they could to help the evacuees from Fort McMurray after their community was devastated by wildfires. That major effort saw people of all ages doing what they could to assist the evacuees when they were sent out of harm's way, by providing clothes, food and household goods, as well as monetary donations to help them cope with the tragedy. Even huge companies got in the act, donating everything from new appliances to manpower and equipment use to help out the situation.

We have a group of ladies in this community that provide help to people in need on an ongoing basis, meeting each week to sew quilts for less fortunate people as well as those touched by tragedy, and who provide pillows and other necessities for inner city children who attend camps just for them.

Major fundraising efforts on behalf of service clubs also help out our local United Church camp and camps for children with cancer and other health problems. People come from near and far to help raise funds for organ transplant recipients via the 2nd Chance Trail Ride and for cancer victims with Haying in the 30s.

All those donors and workers, along with many more that help out in far to many ways to list, are all Santas in their own way, spreading love and generosity to those who need it the most. They may not grow long white beards, wear red suits or drive reindeer, but they give just as generously as the jolly old elf, and they don't have to climb down a chimney to do it.

No Santa Claus? Who could believe that?

Way Back When...

Seniors' taxi, 60-foot spruce, snowmobiles and surfer dude

Here's the news that made the headlines of the Lakeland Review and Elk Point Review for the week of December 19 in...

1986

Santa brought Elk Point seniors living in Heritage Lodge, Buckingham House, Fort George Manor and their own homes a new once-weekly taxi service to the downtown area and return. Elk Point Regional Recreation and Cultural Board held their last meeting before disbanding as of December 31, with their functions being taken over by the Town's administration and the Elks Lodge.

1991

Elk Point Community Choir saluted the season at their second annual Christmas concert, with a packed crowd on hand. Heinsburg's 60-foot spruce was decked from tip to trunk with lights donated by businesses and individuals, and was lighted up following a winter wiener roast and carol sing.

1996

The Town of Elk Point passed their off-highway vehicle bylaw, regulating the movement of snowmobiles, ATVs and any other type of off-road vehicle within town limits/. Down-home country Christmas entertainment was featured at Heinsburg's annual Community Christmas supper.

2001

Santa gave up sleigh and reindeer to face the challenges as a survivor and a surfer in a pair of entertaining concerts at Elk Point Elementary School. Bernice Capjack won Town Council's by-election seat, collecting 147 out of 182 votes cast by Elk Point residents.

2006

Figures, not sugarplums, danced in the heads of Elk Point town council on Monday, Dec. 11, as they approved their 2007 operating budget.

FRANCIS AND RITA DALLAIRE brought their team to Elk Point to take participants in the Elk Point Baptist Church Christmas Carnival for numerous tours through the snowbank-lined streets, with sleighbells jingling merrily and their woodstove sending a plume of smoke into the frosty air.

2011

Elk Point Chamber of Commerce thought they might be judging Christmas lights in their traditional format for the final time, with suggestions made that with the chamber's focus on green energy and carbon footprint reduction, they should encourage residents to create energy-saving displays. Alberta Health Services' lengthy request process for ambulance service proposals was finally over, and Prairie Emergency Medical Systems Inc. was awarded the contract for an area that now included Elk Point, effective March 1, 2012.

The Elk Point Review publishes a variety of opinions as a contribution to debate on matters of public concern. Unsigned editorials express the view of this newspaper's editorial board which includes the Publisher and the Editor. Signed pieces express the view of the individual writer.

Elk Point Review

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Decrease in assessment reflected in County's interim budget

JANICE HUSER
Review Contributor

The County of St. Paul is estimating a possible decrease in assessment revenue of $1.5 million for its 2017 budget, which was reflected in the numbers presented and approved in the municipality's interim budget on Dec. 13.

"The County had some challenges in regards to the interim budget," said CAO Sheila Kitz, after the meeting. "Due to the amended Assessment Year Modifiers coming from the province, the county will see a reduction of assessment in pipelines and wells of 10 per cent and 15 per cent respectively."

The county also anticipates a decrease in Machinery and Equipment assessment due to the current economic situation.

"Altogether, this decrease in assessment results in $1.5 million less tax revenue for the county at 2016 tax rates."

But, final assessment numbers will not be available until the end of February, so council will re-evaluate the hard decisions and cuts that were made in the preliminary budget once all revenue numbers are more firm, explained the CAO.

"The economy is a challenge as we move forward," said CAO Steve Upham, following the meeting. He noted that the $1.5 million decrease is certainly going to be a hit to the county.

He affirmed that council is being very conservative in its budget this year and the municipality will use a small portion of its surplus from 2016, in the upcoming year.

Despite the somewhat gloomy outlook, Upham is confident that things will improve.

"In general, there are some signs of life in the oil industry. People are getting put back to work."

The interim Operating and Capital Budget estimated numbers for 2017 are as follows:

Operating & Capital Revenues - $45,728,389
Debenture & Funding From restricted Surplus - $ 2,897,134
Operations Expenditures - $28,195,774
Replacement Reserve - $ 96,000
Capital Lease Buyout - $ 1,320,000
Debenture Repayment - $ 911,744
Capital Expenditures - $18,102,005

Section 242(2) of the M.G.A. states that council may adopt an interim operating budget for part of a calendar year. The county's full budget is typically finalized and approved in the spring, following the provincial budget.

Ashmont- Lottie Lake waterline now complete

JANICE HUSER
Review Contributor

The Ashmont to Lottie Lake waterline is now complete, reported County of St. Paul CAO Sheila Kitz at council's regular monthly meeting on Dec. 13.

Although there was a plan to flush residents' lines prior to the water being turned on, the extremely cold weather changed those plans, and instead residents should notice a difference in the quality of their water in the next couple weeks, once reservoirs catch up.

Urban Systems, the engineers working on the project, are now doing the final calculations to set the water rates, looking at fixed and variable costs.

Once the recently approved Mallaig waterline is complete, which should be next year, a review of the entire system will be done, in regards to water rates.

Also nearby, work on the Ashmont Lagoon will resume in the spring, but the project is very close to being complete, according to Reeve Steve Upham.

Elk Point Recreation

Council approved how it will divide up the $55,000 annual contribution to the Elk Point recreation facilities.

The CG Baker Arena and the AG Ross Arena will each get just over $18,300, while the Elk Point Curling Club will see $6,833 go toward its facility.

Request for compensation

A request for travel compensation due to a road being closed during the construction of the Ashmont Lagoon, was denied following a recorded vote on Tuesday.

The matter came up during Tuesday's regular meeting. According to the county's agenda, an Ashmont area resident was seeking compensation in the amount of $2,600 for having to drive his daughter to the bus, and picking her up after school for 52 days, while the road was closed.

It was noted that if the bus driver had chosen an alternate option, it would have added 20 to 25 minutes to the bus pick-up time for other students, and the bus driver refused.

"We do many projects where people are inconvenienced," said Coun. Glen Ockerman, when discussing the issue in council, for example, when roads are closed due to construction and farmers have to transport their product further than normal. In the end, it's for the "betterment" of the community, he added.

Upham noted that because the situation dealt with the education of a child, he felt it had to be looked at differently, and confirmed there was no feasible way to reroute the bus.

Coun. Frank Sloan made a motion to deny the request, and Upham requested a recorded vote on the issue. Sloan said he felt it was in fact similar to situations where farmers have to reroute to continue on their operations when roads are closed due to construction projects.

Sloan also brought up a situation in his division where parents had to drive their children to school for a period of time when a road wasn't in drivable condition, and the school bus was unable to use the road.

Coun. Maxine Fodness said her concern with the request arose based on the amount of money being sought as compensation, and she wondered how many kilometres extra the parent had to drive to get his child to school.

(Continued on Page 12)

COUNTY OF ST. PAUL NO. 19

HIGHLIGHTS

December 13, 2016 Council Meeting

GIS System – Public access to the County GIS system is now available. The system provides public assessment information on county properties. Visit the County webpage at www.county.stpaul.ab.ca. Click on "Webmap" and then on the "HERE" button. Click on the "Searches" tab and then use the drop down line under search groups. At this point, you will enter the legal description or the rural address to search a property.

Plebiscite – Council passed a motion to hold a plebiscite at the November 2017 election. When Electors go to the polls, they will have the opportunity to vote on whether or not they want the County to hire a peace officer to carry out traffic and bylaw enforcement activities within its boundaries, which will be funded through general revenue.

Fee Schedule Bylaw – Council adopted an updated fee schedule bylaw which includes the rate changes that were made over the course of the year as well as proposed changes recommended by the Safety Codes Act Committee. Rates in the bylaw are reviewed annually to keep up with inflation rates and to reevaluate the services provided to ratepayers.

Spedden/Ashmont Water Transmission Line – The water transmission line from Spedden to Ashmont which will provide water to Ashmont and Lottie Lake residents is finally complete. Water started flowing from Spedden to Ashmont on December 8, 2016. The engineers, construction team, and county staff will be monitoring the system closely to ensure that the system performs as expected over the next couple weeks. County Council will be determining a new rate structure at the January 2017 Council meeting for residents on municipal water.

2017 Interim Municipal Budget – As per section 242(2) of the MGA, Council approved the 2017 Interim Operating and Capital Budget:

Capital & Operating Revenues	$48,625,523
Operating Expenditures	$28,195,774
Replacement Reserve	$96,000
Capital Lease Buyout	$1,320,000
Debenture Repayment	$911,744
Capital Expenditures	$18,102,005

Agreements – Council extended the Joint Fire Services Agreement with the Town of St. Paul for one year ending December 31, 2017. Council also approved the Regional Emergency Management Joint Services Agreement and Occupational Health and Safety Agreement with the Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay, Town of St. Paul and Town of Elk Point. The emergency management and OH & S agreements outline the operating and capital expenses which is based on a per capita basis. Council will be working with the Town of St. Paul to develop the St. Paul North Joint Area Structure Plan.

2017 Salary Approval – Full time employees and Councillors will receive an additional $200 on their health spending account and part time employees will receive $100. Also, vision coverage will be added to the extended health care package. There will be no cost of living increase for 2017.

Planning and Development – Council gave first reading to Bylaw No. 2016-25 to rezone 2.94 acres in SW 2-58-11-W4 from Industrial/Commercial to Agricultural. Council also gave first reading to Bylaw No. 2016-24 to rezone 9.98 acres from Industrial/Commercial to Country Residential One.

Council tabled a request from a ratepayer for a refund of $740 which includes their subdivision application fee, land title retrieval and ERCB abandoned well search on the SE 25-56-7-W4.

Administration will be negotiating with the owner of SE 18-59-9-W4 to purchase approximately. 784 acres which will serve as access to the back of the lots in Plan 7920260 at Vincent Lake. The residents are currently using the property to access their lots.

Equipment – A 2018 Western Star Roll off Truck for $226,000, has been ordered for the Environmental Waste department to be funded from the 2017 Budget.

Funding Support:

- $500 MS Walk
- $730 Riverview Seniors to offset Insurance Costs
- $1,000 Mallaig School for Boys and Girls Provincial Volleyball
- $1,000 Regional High School for Boys and Girls Provincial Volleyball
- $1,000 St. Paul Curling Club for Canada 150 Celebration
- $1,500 Career Expo
- $18,334 CG Baker Arena
- $18,333 AG Ross Arena
- $6,833 Elk Point Curling Club

Christmas Hours – The County Office and Public Works Shop will close from December 26 to January 2 inclusive.

For more information, contact
Sheila Kitz, CAO, County of St. Paul
At 780-645-3301, ext 208

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READERS HELP SANTA - Both Elk Point Elementary School Grade 4 classes participated in an Accelerated Reading (AR) challenge in the Learning Commons (Library). They were each given two classes to participate in a reading marathon. For every 100 per cent a student got on an AR test, our Learning Commons donated one item to Santa's Anonymous. In total, 43 items were donated!

Diane Dewan photos

Christmas in four-part harmony

PASTOR JIM MACLELLAN
Elk Point Baptist Church

In Classical music, the most important combination of four instruments in performances that are regal and yet intimate is the string quartet. String quartets most often consist of two violins, a viola, and a cello. This expression of music comes from the four main registers of the human voice: soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Individually quartet members most often have a limited range that fits well within their register and individually the sing what might be called counterpoint melodies. Yet when combined in four-part harmony they express a beauty and agreement that is indescribably appealing.

We know the Christmas story is one amazing story. But we also know that the Gospels in the New Testament deal with the story of the birth of Jesus in four very different – without contradicting each other. Like a performance by a great quartet, these evangelists have a point to their song; and like a great piece of music, the parts were not randomly thrown together, but were carefully chosen and included so that the combined voice would be harmonious and thrilling. Let's look at each of the parts:

Matthew sings bass and we hear of Jesus as the King of the Jews worthy of obedience and worship;

Luke sings the melody and gives us a very human Savior that brings us Good News to the poor and rejected;

Mark sings baritone. He reveals to us that greatness is servant. Jesus is the prime example of service, even to the death on a Cross for the sake of others; and

John sings tenor, exalting Jesus as God, who comes as the Word become flesh and this shines in the darkness to us salvation.

From Pastors Jim and Joshua, the leadership and entire congregation of Elk Point Baptist Church, may you hear the Gospel Quartet sing their praise to the Savior in four-part harmony as you read, meditate on the Lord Jesus this Christmas season. May the Holy Spirit bring alive these Voices that He blended so carefully in this quartet of music.

Merry Christmas.

Christmas at our churches

Elk Point
Christian Community Church
Christmas Eve Service - 7 p.m.

Elk Point Baptist Church
Christmas Eve Service - 7 p.m.
Christmas Day Service - 10 a.m.

St. Michael's
Roman Catholic Church
Christmas Eve Mass - 9 p.m,. Please bring a plate of goodies to share after Mass.
Christmas Day - no Mass in Elk Point.
Bilingual Mass at 11 a.m. at St. Paul Cathedral.
New Year's Day Mass - 9 a.m..

Christmas Concerts this week

Tuesday, Dec. 20: Jack and Jill Playschool, 10 a.m.
Heinsburg Community School 1 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 21: Elk Point Elementary School, 1 p.m.
KB, Grades 1-3
Thursday, Dec. 22: Elk Point Elementary School, 1 p.m.
KA. Grades 4-6

It's a wrap for Santas Anonymous 2017

ELK POINT COMMUNITY LIONS AND THEIR FRIENDS spent last Friday wrapping gifts and assembling food hampers for the Santas Anonymous program, above. Left to right are Sandie Bishop, Darlene Kozicky, Sue Campbell, Sandy Kummetz, Lions president Diane Peifer, Susan Frisby, Zoe Ainsworth and Adriana Boorse. Not shown, June Jenkins and other volunteers who came later in the day.

THE GIFT OF GIVING- Elk Point Elementary School students and Staff participated in the Gift of Giving Bingo. Every class was given a BINGO card with non-perishable food items instead of numbers. The students and staff were eager to play and their giving was overwhelming! Miss Leaf's 4A class Bingo'd on the second day! Quickly after the that, Bingos came from the other classes! All food received went to Santas Anonymous, where it filled a long lineup of tables (below) and was added to the Say Good Buy to Hunger bags purchased by Co-op shoppers (below right) to fill food hampers for 15 individuals in addition to the 37 families who also received boxes of gifts. The total of 52 is up only three from last year's Santas Anonymous total of 49 recipients.

Playschool visits Heritage Lodge

The students of Elk Point Jack and Jill Playschool dropped in on the residents at Heritage Lodge last week for their annual Christmas visit The residents were entertained with five Christmas carols and some favourite classroom songs by each class of students. Good times and great memories to be cherished during this holiday season. A Merry Christmas to everyone and all the best in 2017!

Diane Hyslop photos

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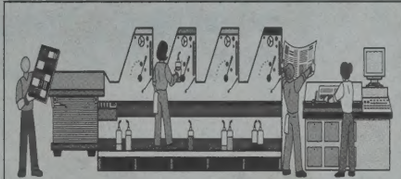

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Two smiling eyes at rest
God broke our hearts to prove
He only takes the Best.
The tears in our eyes will wipe away
But the love in our hearts
Will forever stay.

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ANDRISHAK, Joanne
Feb. 2, 1929 - Dec. 22, 1991

25 years have now passed since you were called away, how well we do remember that sad and weary day. You suffered much, you murmured not, we watched you day by day, we cried and prayed that your dear life would not be taken away.

Still loved, still missed everyday by Peter and Patricia

Raymond Ewasiuk
September 12, 1940
December 26, 2006

You will never be forgotten;
Love binds your spirit and mine.

I often feel your presence
Though we are apart,

You are always and forever,
Alive within my heart.

Sadly missed by your family :
Levina, Valerie, Bill, Darryl, Donna, Athena and Savanna

Christmas comes to Ferguson Flats

Ferguson Flats area residents enjoyed the annual Family Christmas Party on Sunday, with a big potluck supper followed by the arrival of a very special visitor. Above, Gabe Bayduza led the youngsters in singing "Here Comes Santa Claus," and suddenly, there he was, (above right) with bells ringing and a big "Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas" for everyone. After visiting with and handing out gifts to all the youngsters and many of the adults, the children surrounded him for a very merry photo.

County

(Continued from Page 5)

Hopefully, at the end of the project, it's better for everyone," said Ockerman.

The motion to deny the request was carried, with Coun. Laurent Amyotte and Upham voting against the motion.

Career fair

A career expo is set to be held in St. Paul in April,2017, Council heard from representatives with Careers – The Next Generation.

About 500-600 students are expected to attend the event, which will profile a variety of careers in various industries. The event will take place during the day, with school busing students in to the event.

The goal of the expo is to create first-jobs in the community, and bring youth back to the area once they've completed post-secondary training. There will be a number of hands-on displays for students to try out.

Council was receptive to the idea of becoming involved in the expo, and administration asked if the municipality could have its own table set up, since there are many job opportunities with the municipality.

A motion to support the career fair with $1,500 was carried. The county will also be setting up a table at the expo.

Christmas bird count's 28th year in area

PAUL E. BOISVERT
Review Contributor

For the 117th time, birders throughout the world will be taking part in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This year's CBC for the Town and County of St. Paul marks the 28th year that this activity is being held in this area.

The local town and county count will run from Dec. 17 to Jan. 6, inclusive.

Anyone wishing to participate is asked to do observations and counts on as many days as they wish. Observations can be of a feeder watch and/or a field observation. When doing a feeder watch, observers are asked to report the largest number of birds seen at any one time and not a running calculation.

For example, if on Dec. 17 you see six Black Capped Chickadees in a group and on Dec. 18 you see four, you should report the six and not a total of 10. When reporting your count, please indicate whether this was carried out in the town or county.

Reports can be submitted by e-mail to hawkowl4@telus.net (that's 4 not 14) or by phone to 780-645-3409 (evenings) and leave a message.

The quirky weather patterns of the past two years may produce a local count report quite different than that of previous years. For example, most years hundreds of Bohemian Waxwings come into town to feast on the Mayday or Mountain Ash berries. This year, few berries remain on these trees as the Robin population was exceptionally large and stayed for much longer than usual.

Also, the relatively milder fall with no snow cover may have given the Waxwings all the food they wanted out in the wooded areas. It will be interesting to see what the end result will be.

While some Canada Geese and various ducks may even over-winter where there is some open water such as at the out-flow of the sewage treatment plant, the large flocks still moving about are indicators of three elements significant to them - open water, abundance of food, and temperatures. The amount of crop in the fields may also be attractive to owls as the mouse/vole numbers are probably much higher than normal.

We welcome one and all to take part in this activity as there is no skill limitations, nor age limitations. Plus it can be a great family challenge to see who comes up with the greatest number of the 30 to 40 species which are here for the winter.

A complete report will be published in the Review at the conclusion of the activity.

Further questions can be directed to the contact information given above.